



**COVER**

British woodland cover was at 3.9% (3m acres).

**WOODS OF THE WESTERN FRONT**

The landscape of the Western Front was scattered with woods and copses in the early 1900s. Woods were considered important allies for defence, giving the troops camouflage. Unfortunately, the majority were reduced to burnt stumps under the heavy bombardment.

**1/3**

Imports dropped to under a 1/3 in the first six months of the war, while demand for timber continued to grow.

On 15 Feb 1916, an urgent message was cabled to Canada calling for assistance in the production of timber for war provisions - specifically for 1500 men to form a battalion of lumbermen.

**OBSERVATION TREES**

Artists in the Royal Engineers selected a real tree on the battlefield by measuring and photographing it extensively. An artificial tree was then reproduced which had space for a sniper or observer inside. Under the cover of night, the real tree was cut down and replaced with the observation tree.



By the end of the conflict numbers in the lumber battalion had grown to 17,000 men across 41 companies in Britain and 60 companies in France.

**HOME-GROWN**

By the 1930s home-grown timber was the largest source of timber for Britain.

**BEFORE THE WAR**

1913

1914

1915

**DURING THE WAR**

1916

1917

**POST WAR**

1918

1920s

1930s

**RUSSIA**

In 1913 35% of our timber imports came from Russia.



**35%**

**ALMOST HALF**

By 1914 Britain was responsible for almost half of the world's timber imports.

**DEMAND GROWS**

Throughout the war timber supplies continued to be a problem.



Demand continued to grow as they were needed for pit props and building railway improvements for transporting soldiers and supplies.

**WORKING THE LAND**

By 1917, 250,000 women were on the land and 400 were employed as foresters.



**SUPPLIES**

By the end of the war timber supplies were astonishingly low and the landscape had changed forever. Prime Minister Lloyd George famously remarked that Britain came closer to losing the war through lack of timber than want of food.



**RESERVES**

The post-war Acland Report ruled that Britain must keep a reserve of standing timber for emergencies and make better use of uncultivated and derelict land.

Over the next 80 years 1.7m acres of land were planted, the majority within 40 years.

